Rulings of Udhiyah

(Sacrifice)

Praise be to Allaah and peace and blessings be upon the Messenger of Allaah, Muhammad, and upon his family and companions.

Udhiyah is one of the great rituals of Islam, in which we remember the Unity of Allaah, His blessings upon us and the obedience of our father Ibraaheem to his Lord, and in this act of udhiyah there is much goodness and blessing. So the Muslim must pay attention to its great importance. The following is a brief look at this important ritual.

Udhiyah refers to the animal (camel, cattle or sheep) that is sacrificed as an act of worship to Allaah, in the country in which the person offering the sacrifice lives, during the period from after the Eid prayer on the Day of Nahr (Eid al-Adhaa) until the last of the Days of Tashreeq (the 13^{th} day of Dhu'l-Hijjah), with the intention of offering sacrifice. Allaah says (interpretation of the meaning):

"Therefore turn in prayer to your Lord anf sacrifice (to Him only)." [al-Kawthar 108:2]

"Say (O Muhammad): 'Verily, my prayer, my sacrifice, my living and my dying are for Allaah, the Lord of the 'Aalameen (mankind, jinns and all that exists)." [al-An'aam 6:162]

"And for every nation We have appointed religious ceremonies, that they may mention the Name of Allaah over the beast of cattle that He has given them for food. And your God is One God, so you must submit to Him Alone (in Islam)…" [al-Hajj 22:34]

Udhiyyah is a confirmed Sunnah according to the majority of scholars (some scholars say that it is waajib or obligatory; this will be discussed in more detail below). The basic principle is that it is required at the appointed time from one who is alive on behalf of himself and the members of his household, and he may include in the reward for it whoever he wishes, living or dead. With regard to udhiyah on behalf of one who is dead, if the deceased bequeathed up to one third of his wealth for that purpose, or included it in his waqf (endowment), then these wishes must be carried out, otherwise, if a person wishes to offer a sacrifice on behalf of someone who has died, this is a good deed and is considered to be giving charity on behalf of the dead. But the Sunnah is for a man to include the members of his household, living and deed, in his udhiyah, and when he slaughters it, he should say, "*Allaahumma haadha 'anni wa 'an aali bayti* (O Allaah, this is on behalf of myself and the members of my household" – he does not have to make a separate sacrifice on behalf of every deceased person.

The scholars agreed that sacrificing the animal and giving its meat in charity is better than giving its value in charity, because the Messenger (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon

him) used to make the sacrifice, and he did not do anything but that which is best and most befitting. This is the opinion of Abu Haneefah, al-Shaafa'i and Ahmad.

The virtues of udhiyah and the best of udhiyah

A sheep is good enough as a sacrifice for one man and the members of his household and his children, because of the hadeeth of Abu Ayyoob: “At the time of the Messenger of Allaah (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him), a man would sacrifice a sheep on behalf of himself and the members of his household, and they would eat from it and give some to others.” (Reported by Ibn Maajah and al-Tirmidhi, who classed it as saheeh)

The kinds of animals prescribed for sacrifice are camels, cattle and sheep. Some of the scholars said that the best sacrifice is camels, then cattle, then sheep, then a share in a she-camel or cow, because the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) said concerning Friday prayers: “Whoever goes to [Friday prayers] early, it is equivalent to him sacrificing a camel.” This is the opinion of the three imaams Abu Haneefah, al-Shaafa'i and Ahmad. On this basis, a sheep is better than one-seventh of a camel or cow. Maalik said that the best is a young sheep, then a cow then a camel, because the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) sacrificed two rams, and he never did anything but that which was the best. The response to that is that he (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) always chose what was more appropriate out of kindness towards his ummah, because they would follow his example, and he did not want to make things difficult for them. (Fataawa al-Shaykh ‘Abd al-‘Azeez ibn Baaz).

A camel or cow is enough for seven people, because of the report narrated by Jaabir (may Allaah be pleased with him) who said: “We sacrificed at al-Hudaybiyah with the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him), a camel for seven and a cow for seven.” According to one version: “The Messenger of Allaah (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) commanded us to share camels and cattle, each seven men sharing one animal.” According to another version: “So a cow would be sacrificed on behalf of seven men and we would share it.” (Reported by Muslim)

Ruling of udhiyah:

Udhiyah is one of the rituals of Islam. It is mentioned in *Jawaahir al-Ikleel Sharh Mukhtasar Khaleel* that if the people of a city or country neglect udhiyah, they should be fought, because it is one of the rituals of Islam. (*Rasaa’il Fiqhiyyah* by Shaykh Ibn ‘Uthaymeen, p. 46). There are two scholarly opinions on udhiyah:

1. that it is waajib (obligatory). This is the opinion of al-Oozaa’i, al-Layth and Abu Haneefah, and it is one of the two opinions narrated from Imaam Ahmad. It was also the opinion of Shaykh al-Islam Ibn Taymiyah, and is one of the two opinions in the madhhab of Maalik, or is what seems to be the madhhab of Maalik. Those who favour this opinion take the following as evidence:

1. The aayah: *“Therefore turn in prayer to your Lord anf sacrifice (to Him only).” [al-*

Kawthar 108:2]. This is a command, and a command implies that something is obligatory.

2. The hadeeth of Jundub (may Allaah be pleased with him), reported in *al-Saheehayn* and elsewhere, who said: “The Messenger of Allaah (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) said: ‘Whoever slaughtered his sacrifice before he prays, let him slaughter another one in its place, and whoever did not slaughter a sacrifice, let him do so in the name of Allaah.’” (Reported by Muslim, 3621)

3. The hadeeth: “Whoever can afford to offer a sacrifice but does not do so, let him not approach our place or prayer.” (Reported by Ahmad and Ibn Maajah; classed as saheeh by al-Haakim from the hadeeth of Abu Hurayrah (may Allaah be pleased with him). It says in *Fath al-Baari* that its men are thiqaat).

(B) that it is a confirmed Sunnah (sunnah mu’akkadah). This is the opinion of the majority, and it is the madhhab of al-Shaafa'i and the better-known opinion of Maalik and Ahmad. But most of those who favour this opinion stated that it is makrooh (disliked) for the one who is able to offer a sacrifice to neglect to do so. They base their opinion on the following:

1. The hadeeth of Jaabir (may Allaah be pleased with him) in *Sunan Abi Dawood*, where he said: “I prayed on Eid al-Adhaa with the Messenger of Allaah (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him), and when he finished (the prayer), he was brought two rams, and he sacrificed them. He said, ‘In the Name of Allaah, Allaah is Most Great. This is on behalf of myself and any member of my ummah who did not offer a sacrifice.” (*Sunan Abi Dawood bi Sharh Muhammad Shams al-Haq Abaadi*, 7/486)

2. The hadeeth reported by all the famous muhadditheen apart from al-Bukhaari: “Whoever among you wants to offer a sacrifice, let him not take anything from his hair or nails.” Shaykh Ibn ‘Uthaymeen, may Allaah preserve him, said, following his discussion of those who say it is obligatory and those who say it is Sunnah, “Each point of view has its evidence, but to be on the safe side, the one who is able to offer a sacrifice should not neglect to do so, because of what is involved in this act of reverence towards Allaah, remembering Him, and making sure that one has nothing to be blamed for.

Conditions of udhiyah

1. The animal should have reached the required age, which is six months for a lamb, one year for a goat, two years for a cow and five years for a camel.

2. It should be free of any faults, because the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) said: “There are four that will not do for sacrifice: a one-eyed animal whose defect is obvious, a sick animal whose sickness is obvious, a lame animal whose limp is obvious and an emaciated animal that has no marrow in its bones .” (Saheeh, *Saheeh al-Jaami’*, no. 886). There are milder defects that do not disqualify an animal, but it is makrooh to sacrifice such animals, such as an animal with a horn or ear missing, or an

animal with slits in its ears, etc. Udhiyah is an act of worship to Allaah, and Allaah is Good and accepts only that which is good. Whoever honours the rites of Allaah, this has to do with the piety (taqwa) of the heart.

3. It is forbidden to sell it. If an animal has been selected for sacrifice, it is not permissible to sell it or give it away, except in exchange for one that is better. If an animal gives birth, its offspring should be sacrificed along with it. It is also permissible to ride it if necessary. The evidence for this is the report narrated by al-Bukhaari and Muslim from Abu Hurayrah (may Allaah be pleased with him), who said that the Messenger of Allaah (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) saw a man leading his camel and told him, "Ride it." He said, "It is for sacrifice." He said, "Ride it" a second or third time.

4. It should be sacrificed at the specified time, which is from after the prayer and khutbah of Eid – not from when the time for the prayer and khutbah starts – until before sunset on the last of the days of Tashreeq, which is the 13th day of Dhu'l-Hijjah. The Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) said: "Whoever sacrifices before the prayer, let him repeat it." (Reported by al-Bukhaari and Muslim). 'Ali (may Allaah be pleased with him) said: "The days of Nahr (Sacrifice) are the day of al-Adhaa and the three days following it." This is also the opinion of al-Hasan al-Basri, 'Ata' ibn Abi Rabaah, al-Oozaa'i, al-Shaafa'i and Ibn al-Mundhir, may Allaah have mercy on them all.

What should be done with the sacrifice?

1. It is mustahabb (liked, preferable) for the one who has made a sacrifice to not eat anything on that day before he eats from it, if this is possible, because of the hadeeth, "Let every man eat from his sacrifice." (Classed as saheeh in *Saheeh al-Jaami'*, 5349). This eating should be after the Eid prayer and khutbah. This is the opinion of the scholars, including 'Ali, Ibn 'Abbaas, Maalik, al-Shaafa'i and others. The evidence for this is the hadeeth of Buraydah (may Allaah be pleased with him): "The Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) would not go out on the day of Fitr until he had eaten, and he would not eat on the day of Adhaa until he had slaughtered (his sacrifice)." (Al-Albaani said: its isnaad is saheeh. *Al-Mishkaat*, 1/452).

2. It is better for a person to slaughter the sacrifice himself, but if he does not, it is mustahabb for him to be present when it is slaughtered.

3. It is mustahaab to divide the meat into three: one third to be eaten, one third to be given as gifts and one third to be given in charity. This was the opinion of Ibn Mas'ood and Ibn 'Umar (may Allaah be pleased with them). The scholars agreed that it is not permissible to sell anything from its meat, fat or skin. In a saheeh hadeeth, the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) said: "Whoever sells the skin of his udhiyah, there is no udhiyah for him (i.e., it is not counted as udhiyah)." (Classed as hasan in *Saheeh al-Jaami'*, 6118). The butcher should not be given anything of it by way

> of reward or payment, because 'Ali (may Allaah be pleased with him) said: "The Messenger of Allaah (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) commanded me to take care of the sacrifice and to give its meat, skin and raiment (covering used for protection) in charity, and not to give anything of it to the butcher as a compensation . He said, 'We will give him something from what we have.'" (Agreed upon). It was said that it is permissible to give the butcher something as a gift, and that it is permissible to give some of it to a kaafir if he is poor or a relative or a neighbour, or in order to open his heart to Islam. (*Fataawa al-Shaykh 'Abd al-'Azeez ibn Baaz*).

Question: what should the Muslim avoid in the first ten days of Dhu'l-Hijjah if he wants to offer a sacrifice?

The Sunnah indicates that the one who wants to offer a sacrifice must refrain from taking anything from his hair, nails or skin from the first day of Dhu'l-Hijjah until he offers his sacrifice, because the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) said: "When you see the new moon of Dhu'l-Hijjah, if any one of you wants to offer a sacrifice, let him not remove anything from his hair or nails until he has offered his sacrifice." According to another report: "Let him not touch any part of his hair or nails." (Reported by Muslim with four isnaads, 13/146). This command implies obligation and the prohibition implies that it is forbidden, according to the most correct opinion, because these are absolutes with no exceptions. If a person deliberately takes something (from his hair or nails), he must seek the forgiveness of Allaah, but he does not have to pay any fidyah (penalty), and his udhiyah is still valid. Whoever needs to remove some of his hair or nails because leaving it will cause him harm, such as a torn nail or a wound in a site covered by hair, should remove it, and there is no sin on him if he does so. This is not more serious than the muhrim (person in ihraam for Hajj or 'Umrah) who is allowed to shave if not doing so will cause him harm. There is nothing wrong with men and women washing their hair during the first ten days of Dhu'l-Hijjah, because the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) only forbade removing hair, and because the muhrim is allowed to wash his head.

The wisdom behind the prohibition on removing hair and nails is because the one who is going to offer a sacrifice is like the one who is in ihraam for Hajj and 'Umrah with regard to some rituals, which is the offering of a sacrifice in order to draw closer to Allaah. Thus some of the rulings of ihraam apply to the one who wants to offer a sacrifice, so he should not touch his hair and nails until he has slaughtered his sacrifice, in the hope that Allaah will release him from the fire of Hell. And Allaah knows best.

If a person removes some of his hair and nails during the first ten days of Dhu'l-Hijjah because he is not planning to offer a sacrifice, then he decides to sacrifice, he should refrain from cutting his hair or nails from the moment he takes the decision.

There are some women who delegate their brothers or sons to do the sacrifice on their behalf so that they can cut their hair during the first ten days of Dhu'l-Hijjah. This is not correct, because the ruling applies to the one who is making the sacrifice, whether he or she delegates someone else to do the actual slaughter or not. The prohibition does not apply to

the person appointed, it applies to the person who wants to offer a sacrifice on behalf of himself, as is indicated by the hadeeth. As for the person who is doing the sacrifice on behalf of another, whether because of a will or because he has been delegated to do so, the prohibition does not apply to him.

It is apparent that this prohibition applies to the one who is offering the sacrifice, and does not extend to his wife or children, unless one of them is offering a sacrifice on his or her own behalf. The Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) used to sacrifice on behalf of the family of Muhammad, and it was not reported that he forbade them to remove anything of their hair or nails.

Whoever is planning to offer a sacrifice, then decides to go for Hajj, should not remove anything of his hair or nails when he wants to enter ihraam, because this is Sunnah only when there is a need for it. But if he is doing Hajj "tamattu'" [where one performs 'Umrah, then ends ihraam and enters a new state of ihraam for Hajj], he should shorten his hair when he finishes 'Umrah because that is part of the ritual.

The things that are forbidden for the person who wants to offer a sacrifice are reported in the hadeeth quoted above. It is not forbidden for him to wear perfume or to have intercourse with his wife or to wear sewn garments and so on . And Allah knows best.

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